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PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Report of the Main Committee

Addendum

At the _____ meeting, on _____ September 1995, the Main Committee approved chapter IV, section B, of the draft platform for action and recommended it to the Conference for adoption. Statements were made by the representatives of _____.

The text of chapter IV, section B, is set out below.

B. Unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities

71. Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys, and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change. Literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in society. Investing in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth that is both sustained and sustainable.

72. On a regional level, girls and boys have achieved equal access to primary education, except in some parts of Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia, where access to education facilities is still inadequate. Progress has been made in secondary education, where equal access of girls and boys has been achieved in some countries. Enrolment of girls and women in tertiary education has increased considerably. In many countries, private schools have also played an important complementary role in improving access to education at all levels. Yet, more than five years after the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) adopted the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, 11/ approximately 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, are without access to primary schooling, and more than two thirds of the world's 960 million illiterate adults are women. The high rate of illiteracy prevailing in most developing countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa and some Arab States, remains a severe impediment to the advancement of women and to development.

73. Discrimination in girls' access to education persists in many areas, owing to customary attitudes, early marriages and pregnancies, inadequate and gender-biased teaching and educational materials, sexual harassment and lack of adequate and physically and otherwise accessible schooling facilities. Girls undertake heavy domestic work at a very early age. Girls and young women are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities, often resulting in poor scholastic performance and early drop-out from the educational system. This has long-lasting consequences for all aspects of women's lives.

74. [Creation of a healthy educational and social environment, in which all human beings, men and women, boys and girls, are consistently encouraged to foster moral and spiritual values, would be extremely effective in the elimination of causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between men and women.]

75. Women should be enabled to benefit from an ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills beyond those acquired during youth. This concept of lifelong learning includes knowledge and skills gained in formal education and training, as well as learning that occurs in informal ways, including volunteer activity, unremunerated work and traditional knowledge.

76. Curricula and teaching materials remain gender-biased to a large degree, and are rarely sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. This reinforces traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society. Lack of gender awareness by educators at all levels strengthens existing inequities between males and females by reinforcing discriminatory tendencies and undermining girls' self-esteem. The lack of sexual and reproductive [health] education has a profound impact on women and men.

77. Science curricula in particular are gender-biased. Science textbooks do not relate to women's and girls' daily experience and fail to give recognition to women scientists. Girls are often deprived of basic education in mathematics and science and technical training, which provide knowledge they could apply to improve their daily lives and enhance their employment opportunities. Advanced study in science and technology prepares women to take an active role in the technological and industrial development of their countries, thus necessitating a diverse approach to vocational and technical training. Technology is rapidly changing the world and has also affected the developing countries. It is essential that women not only benefit from technology, but also participate in the process from the design to the application, monitoring and evaluation stages.

78. Access for and retention of girls and women at all levels of education, including the higher level, and all academic areas is one of the factors of their continued progress in professional activities. Nevertheless, it can be noted that girls are still concentrated in a limited number of fields of study.

79. The mass media are a powerful means of education. As an educational tool the mass media can be an instrument for educators and governmental and non-governmental institutions for the advancement of women and for development. Computerized education and information systems are increasingly becoming an important element in learning and dissemination of knowledge. Television especially has the greatest impact on young people and, as such, has the ability to shape values, attitudes and perceptions of women and girls in both positive and negative ways. It is therefore essential that educators teach critical judgement and analytical skills.

80. Resources allocated to education, particularly for girls and women, are in many countries insufficient and in some cases have been further diminished, including in the context of adjustment policies and programmes. Such insufficient resource allocations have a long-term adverse effect on human development, particularly on the development of women.

81. In addressing unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

[Ensure women's access to quality education and training for self-reliance at all levels and in all fields and sectors]

Strategic objective B.1. Ensure equal access to education

Actions to be taken

82. By Governments:

(a) Advance the goal of equal access to education by taking measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, religion, national origin, age or disability, or any other form of discrimination and, as appropriate, consider establishing procedures to address grievances;

(b) By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children; closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005; universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015;

(c) Eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education by ensuring that women have equal access to career development, training, scholarship and fellowship, and by adopting positive action when appropriate;

(d) Create a gender-sensitive educational system in order to ensure equal educational and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy- and decision-making;

(e) Provide - in collaboration with parents, non-governmental organizations, including youth organizations, communities and the private sector - young women with academic and technical training, career planning, leadership and social skills and work experience to prepare them to participate fully in society;

(f) Increase enrolment and retention rates of girls by allocating appropriate budgetary resources and by enlisting the support of parents and the community, as well as through campaigns, flexible school schedules, incentives, scholarships and other means to minimize the costs of girls' education to their families [and to facilitate parents' ability to choose education for the girl child]; [by ensuring that the rights of women and girls to freedom of conscience and religion are respected in educational institutions] through repealing any discriminatory laws or legislation based on religion, race or culture;

(g) Promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impeded the schooling of pregnant adolescents and young mothers, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible child-care facilities and parental education to encourage those who are

responsible for the care of their children and siblings during their school years, to return to, or continue with and complete schooling;

(h) Improve the quality of education and equal opportunities between women and men in terms of access to ensure that women of all ages can acquire knowledge, develop capacities, aptitudes and skills and ethical values needed to develop and participate fully under equal conditions in the process of social, economic and political development;

(i) Make available non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive professional school counselling and career education programmes to encourage girls to pursue academic and technical curricula in order to widen their future career opportunities;

(j) Encourage ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 12/ where they have not already done so.

Strategic objective B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women world wide [by the year 2000]

Actions to be taken

83. By Governments, national, regional and international bodies, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations:

(a) Reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on rural women, migrant, refugee and internally displaced women and women with disabilities;

(b) Provide universal access to, and seek to ensure gender equality in the completion of, primary education for girls by the year 2000;

(c) Eliminate the gender gap in basic and functional literacy, as recommended in the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien);

(d) Narrow the disparities between developed and developing countries;

(e) Encourage adult and family engagement in learning to promote total literacy for all people;

(f) Promote together with literacy, life skills, scientific and technological knowledge and work towards an expansion of the definition of literacy, taking into account current targets and benchmarks.

Strategic objective B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education

Actions to be taken

84. By Governments, in cooperation with employers, workers and trade unions, international and non-governmental organizations, including women's and youth organizations, and educational institutions:

(a) Develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities;

(b) Provide recognition to non-formal educational opportunities for girls and women in the educational system;

(c) Provide information to women and girls on the availability and benefits of vocational training, training programmes in science and technology and programmes of continuing education;

(d) Design educational and training programmes for women who are unemployed in order to provide them with new knowledge and skills that will enhance and broaden their employment opportunities, including self-employment, and development of their entrepreneurial skills;

(e) Diversify vocational and technical training and improve access for and retention of girls and women in education and vocational training in such fields as science, mathematics, engineering, environmental sciences and technology, information technology and high technology, as well as management training;

(f) Promote women's central role in food and agricultural research, extension and education programmes;

(g) Encourage the adaptation of curricula and teaching materials, encourage a supportive training environment and take positive measures to promote training for the full range of occupational choices of non-traditional careers for women and men, including the development of multidisciplinary courses for science and mathematics teachers to sensitize them to the relevance of science and technology to women's lives;

(h) Develop curricula and teaching materials and formulate and take positive measures to ensure women better access to and participation in technical and scientific areas, especially areas where they are not represented or are underrepresented;

(i) Develop policies and programmes to encourage women to participate in all apprenticeship programmes;

(j) Increase training in technical, managerial, agricultural extension and marketing areas for women in agriculture, fisheries, industry and business, arts and crafts, to increase income-generating opportunities, women's participation in economic decision-making, in particular through women's organizations at the grass-roots level, and their contribution to production, marketing, business, and science and technology;

(k) Ensure access to quality education and training at all appropriate levels for adult women with little or no education, for women with disabilities and for documented migrant, refugee and displaced women to improve their work opportunities.

Strategic objective B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training

Actions to be taken

85. By Governments, educational authorities and other educational and academic institutions:

(a) Elaborate recommendations and develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender-based stereotypes for all levels of education, including teacher training, in association with all concerned - publishers, teachers, public authorities and parents associations;

(b) Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the [family/families] [and society] [in their families and their societies]; in this context, promote equality, cooperation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between girls and boys from pre-school level onward and develop, in particular, educational modules to ensure that boys have the skills necessary to take care of their own domestic needs and to share responsibility for their household and for the care of dependants;

(c) Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness of their own role in the educational process, with a view to providing them with effective strategies for gender-sensitive teaching;

(d) Take actions to ensure that female teachers and professors have the same opportunities as and equal status with male teachers and professors, in view of the importance of having female teachers at all levels and in order to attract girls to school and retain them in school;

(e) Introduce and promote training in peaceful conflict resolution;

(f) Take positive measures to increase the proportion of women gaining access to educational policy- and decision-making, particularly women teachers at all levels of education and in academic disciplines that are traditionally male-dominated, such as the scientific and technological fields;

(g) Support and develop gender studies and research at all levels of education, especially at the postgraduate level of academic institutions, and apply them in the development of curricula, including university curricula, textbooks and teaching aids, and in teacher training;

(h) Develop leadership training and opportunities for all women to encourage them to take leadership roles both as students and as adults in civil society;

(i) Develop appropriate education and information programmes with due respect for multilingualism, particularly in conjunction with the mass media, that make the public, particularly parents, aware of the importance of non-discriminatory education for children and the equal sharing of family responsibilities by girls and boys;

(j) Develop human rights education programmes that incorporate the gender dimension at all levels of education, in particular by encouraging higher education institutions, especially in their graduate and postgraduate juridical, social and political science curricula, to include the study of the human rights of women as they appear in United Nations conventions;

(k) Remove legal and regulatory barriers to [sexual and reproductive health] education within formal education [regarding women's health issues];

(l) Encourage, with the guidance and support of their parents an in cooperation with educational staff and institutions, the elaboration of educational programmes for girls and boys and the creation of integrated services in order to raise awareness of their responsibilities and to help them to assume those responsibilities, taking into account the importance of such education and services to personal development and self-esteem, as well as the urgent need to avoid unwanted pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and such phenomena as sexual violence and abuse;

(m) Provide accessible recreational and sports facilities and establish and strengthen gender-sensitive programmes for girls and women of all ages in education and community institutions and support the advancement of women in all areas of athletics and physical activity, including coaching, training and administration, and as participants at the national, regional and international levels;

(n) Recognize and support the right of indigenous women and girls to education; and promote a multicultural approach to education that is

responsive to the needs, aspirations and cultures of indigenous women, including by developing appropriate education programmes, curricula and teaching aids, to the extent possible in the languages of indigenous people and by providing for the participation of indigenous women in these processes;

(o) Acknowledge and respect the artistic, spiritual and cultural activities of indigenous women;

(p) Ensure that gender, equality, and cultural, religious and other diversity are respected in educational institutions;

(q) Promote education, training and relevant information programmes for rural and farming women through the use of affordable and appropriate technologies and the mass media - for example, radio programmes, cassettes and mobile units;

(r) Provide non-formal education, especially for rural women, in order to realize their potential with regard to health, micro-enterprise, agriculture and legal rights;

(s) Remove all barriers to access to formal education for pregnant adolescents and young mothers, and support the provision of child care and other support services where necessary.

*Strategic objective B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for educational reforms and monitor implementation

Actions to be taken

86. By Governments:

(a) Provide the required budgetary resources to the educational sector, with reallocation within the educational sector to ensure increased funds for basic education, as appropriate;

(b) Establish a mechanism at appropriate levels to monitor the implementation of educational reforms and measures in relevant ministries, and establish technical assistance programmes, as appropriate, to address issues raised by the monitoring efforts.

87. By Governments and, as appropriate, private and public institutions, foundations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations:

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* It is proposed to consider this section in chapters V and VI.

(a) [When necessary], mobilize additional funds from private and public institutions, foundations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations to enable girls and women, as well as boys and men on an equal basis, to complete their education, with a particular emphasis on under-served populations;

(b) Provide funding for special programmes, such as programmes in mathematics, science and computer technology, to advance opportunities for all girls and women.

88. By multilateral development institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral donors and foundations [, consider]:

(a) Increase[ing] funding for the education and training needs of girls and women as a priority in development assistance programmes;

(b) Work with recipient Governments to ensure that funding for women's education is maintained or increased in structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, including lending and stabilization programmes.

89. By international and intergovernmental organizations, especially the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at the global level:

(a) Contribute to the evaluation of progress achieved, using educational indicators generated by national, regional and international bodies, and urge Governments, in implementing measures, to eliminate differences between women and men, boys and girls with regard to opportunities in education and training and the levels achieved in all fields, particularly in primary and literacy programmes;

(b) Provide technical assistance upon request to developing countries to strengthen the capacity to monitor progress in closing the gap between women and men in education, training and research, and in levels of achievement in all fields, particularly basic education and the elimination of illiteracy;

(c) Conduct an international campaign promoting the right of women and girls to education;

(d) Allocate a substantial percentage of their resources to basic education for women and girls.

Strategic objective B.6. [To promote life-long learning [educational processes] for girls and women]

Actions to be taken

90. By Governments, educational institutions and communities:

(a) Ensure the availability of a broad range of educational and training programmes that lead to ongoing acquisition by women and girls of the knowledge and skills required for living in, contributing to and benefiting from, their communities and nations;

(b) Provide support for child care and other services to enable mothers to continue their schooling;

(c) Create flexible education, training and retraining programmes for life-long learning that facilitate transitions between women's activities at all stages of their lives.